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## EDITORIAL NOTES

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School authorities are giving increasing attention to the subject of drawing in secondary schools. This is evident in the space and equipment provided in almost all new high-school buildings, in the search for good teachers, and in the continual inquiries regarding courses and reasonable standards of attainment.

*DRAWING IN  
SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS*

This increase of attention is all the more significant because the greater number of inquiries by educational authorities indicate that the growing recognition of the subject is based not so much upon results already produced or clearer views of the ends to be attained as upon a general feeling that the subject contains more valuable educational material than has yet been put into usable form for schools.

Drawing in high schools has suffered because it has often been taught by specialists who know little of the relation of the subject to the whole field of education and who teach it after the traditions of art schools. A specific instance of failure to appreciate the nature of the educational process is seen when the instructor with all good intention dissociates art from the pupils' current experiences lest it lose its charm, and when he makes it largely a decorative representation of things as they might be without much serious study of things as they are. In more concrete terms, the opportunities offered by the sciences for obtaining mastery in representing facts in a way that justifies itself in the minds of the pupils are often overlooked. Furthermore, pupils very generally are taught to represent nature only by large masses decoratively composed and colored. It is true that great painters usually approximate this method, but their way of arriving at it is less direct. The complex of nature appeals to them. Through long struggle with detail they learn to embody its effect in a few simplified lines and masses. These simplifications differ from the poster style common to high-school work in that they are a masterful generalization of and not an escape from details. The broad masses of the artist are full of meaning because they are the outcome of experience. Therefore they differ much from adopted stylistic conventions.

It would indeed be unfortunate if drawing in high schools were restricted to its use as a means of illustration of the sciences, and it is true that the time devoted to drawing is not sufficient to enable the pupils to go far toward simplifying nature's complexity without more suggestion than their own experiences can provide. The purpose of these paragraphs is to say that the present need in drawing in the majority of high schools is for a more serious effort to interpret visual sensations, to determine and record what

produces the impression in any given case, and so to develop ability to master given problems of shape, color, illumination, texture, and composition. Works of art gain new meaning when used in this connection as reference material for suggestions of the ways in which artists have produced effects.

Pupils may study drawing in order to gain acquaintance with the vocabulary which art uses and thus be able to understand that means which the race has used to record emotional experience, or they may intend to use the language as a means of expression of their own experiences. In any case, the most valuable practice of drawing is as a means of showing real shapes and structures and of making clear, interesting, and sincere interpretations of facts and experiences.

WALTER SARGENT